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Ministry of Attorney General
and Minister responsible for Multiculturalism
Citizenship and Immigration Canada

WELCOMEBC LAUNCHES EASY ACCESS, ONE-STOP WEBSITE

VICTORIA – Easy-to-access information for every stage of the immigration journey is now available at WelcomeBC's new website, www.WelcomeBC.ca, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration Diane Finley and Attorney General and Minister responsible for Multiculturalism Wally Oppal announced today.

"The Government of Canada recognizes how important it is to help immigrant families succeed and prosper wherever they choose to live in Canada," said Finley. "With each region of our country having its own unique characteristics and opportunities, British Columbia's online resources will help newcomers learn about their new community before they arrive and continue to help them once they settle here."

"Having one-stop information available for all aspects of immigration will help ensure British Columbia is a destination of choice for prospective newcomers," said Oppal. "This website is our invitation to immigrants, students and temporary and skilled workers to share in our growing economy, personal freedoms and unlimited opportunities."

New and potential immigrants to British Columbia, including temporary workers, refugees, international students, skilled workers, sponsors and agencies, can access logical, client-centred information about how to live, work, study, settle and make the most of life in B.C. The site provides co-ordinated access to immigration information from the federal government, local governments, Crown corporations and more than 10 provincial government ministries.

Users can easily locate comparative facts about individual regions and urban areas, such as the availability of English as a second language in schools, employment, local economies, transportation, health care and housing. An e-mail feature on each page allows users to send information directly to their contacts.

"This website was built for newcomers based on feedback from new and potential immigrants that they wanted easy access to web-based information from the federal and provincial governments," Oppal added. "The development of this website, with its clear and intuitive content, will benefit our labour market and economy in attracting skilled workers and their families."

Citizenship and Immigration Canada provided close to $1.4 million in funding to create the site, built through a partnership between the ministries of Attorney General and Labour and Citizens' Services (through Service BC). The federal government is providing another $935,000 this year to expand multilingual access and regional services on the site.

The funding is part of WelcomeBC, a provincial initiative announced by Premier Gordon Campbell on June 13, 2007. This program is supported by the Government of Canada through the

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Agreement for Canada-British Columbia Co-operation on Immigration. The initiative helps immigrants moving to B.C. access existing and expanded services under one umbrella, to assist them in better adapting to life in their new communities. For information, go to: www.WelcomeBC.ca.

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